

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13
JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-06
OMB-01 DODE-00 IGA-02 /057 W
-----200915Z 108833 /10

R 200445Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2886

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0200

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJ: AIRCRAFT FOR NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION

REF: 76 RANGOON 3866

1. THE BURMESE CONTINUE TO TELL US INFORMALLY OF THEIR NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TRANSPORT AND UTILITY AIRCRAFT TO USE IN NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION. WE BELIEVE THE BAF'S LACK OF SUFFICIENT AIRCRAFT RESOURCES IS A GENUINE CONSTRAINT ON THE GUB'S ABILITY TO PROSECUTE ITS NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION CAMPAIGN. TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, PARTICULARLY A TYPE WITH STOL CAPABILITY (THE BURMESE HAVE MENTIONED C-130'S AND BUFFALOES), ARE NEEDED TO MOVE TROOPS AND SUPPLIES TO FORWARD STAGING AREAS FROM WHICH HELIBORNE ANTI-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS CAN BE MOUNTED. ADDITIONAL LIGHT UTILITY AIRCRAFT, PARTICULARLY WITH STOL CAPABILITY, WOULD BE USEFUL IN SUCH ROLES AS RECONNAISSANCE, RESUPPLY, CLOSE AIR SUPPORT, MEDEVAC, ETC., AND IN CONNECTION WITH A POTENTIAL HERBICIDE PROGRAM.

2. THE CURRENT BURMA AIR FORCE INVENTORY SHOWS:

A. TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. THE BAF CURRENTLY HAS ONLY THREE OPERATIONAL TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT (INCLUDING THE US-PROVIDED F-27), NONE OF WHICH HAS STOL CAPA-
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BILITY.

B. UTILITY AIRCRAFT. THE LIGHT UTILITY AIRCRAFT IN THE BAF INVENTORY CONSIST OF TWO D-5 BEAGLES, ONE BEECH QUEEN AIR 65, FOUR CESSNA 180'S, NINE DHC-3 OTTERS, AND TWO PC-6/B2 PILATUS TURBO-PORTERS (WITH TWO MORE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE SOON). EXPECT FOR THE PC-6'S, THESE AIRCRAFT ARE ALL OLD AND DIFFICULT TO

MAINTAIN, AND THEIR OVERALL OPERATIONAL READINESS RATE IS LESS THAN 50 PERCENT. THUS, AT ANY GIVEN TIME, THE BAF CANNOT COUNT ON HAVING AVAILABLE MORE THAN ABOUT 10 LIGHT UTILITY AIRCRAFT.

3. WE WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING THE GUB TRANSPORT AND/OR UTILITY AIRCRAFT UNDER THE NARCOTICS CONTROL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. WE HAVE IN MIND, IN PARTICULAR, THE PC-6'S WHICH AMBASSADOR VANCE MENTIONED DURING HIS NOVEMBER VISIT AS POSSIBLY BEING AVAILABLE IN THAILAND AT BARGAIN PRICES. THE BAF ALREADY HAS THIS TYPE OF AIRCRAFT IN ITS FLEET, AND OUR AIZULVXTHE BELIEVES IT IS DISTINCTLY SUITED TO ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM NEEDS BECAUSE OF ITS VERSATILITY AND STOL CAPABILITY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, AIRCRAFT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977RANGOO00200
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770021-0318
Format: TEL
From: RANGOON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770133/aaaabcie.tel
Line Count: 78
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: afe407d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 RANGOON 3866
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Apr-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3547221
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AIRCRAFT FOR NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION
TAGS: SNAR, BM, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/afe407d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009